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GROWING POTATOES in the HOME GARDEN

Where space permits, a Potato patch is a useful adjunct to the Home Vegetable Garden. Although the most largely used of all vegetables, it is one that amateurs very often find most difficult to grow successfully. The principal essentials in successful Potato-growing are good seed and deep, well-worked soil.

Following the right methods of culture, the Potato is easily and profitably grown, and it is the aim of this article to obviate the many apparently overwhelming difficulties that seem to beset the amateur. Generally, Potatoes are planted too late, the result being that instead of having the pleasure and profit of digging early Potatoes, the Home Gardener finds the shops full while his crop is still green, consequently it seems that Potatoes can be purchased cheaper at the shops than they can be grown at home. The amateur very often leaves the crop too long in the ground waiting for the tops to die down, so that digging at the right time is a very important matter. Plant only good seed (treated before planting to avoid disease) in a cool, well-drained, deeply worked soil.



POTATO, SCOTTISH TRIUMPH

The Home Gardener should avoid the Late or Long maturing varieties of Potatoes. Whatever their advantages for growing for Commercial purposes, they are not suited for the Home Garden. Early or quick maturing varieties, and those only, should be selected and planted at the right time, and the right methods followed will give satisfaction and good yields year in and year out. Early Carman,

F. H. BRUNNING Pty. Ltd.

64 ELIZABETH STREET, MELBOURNE

Early Manistee, Scottish Triumph, Maul's Thoroughbred, Early Iona, and Early Vermont are first-class sorts for the Home Garden. The term early, as applied to Potatoes, really means "quicker-maturing."

SOIL.—The Potato is most adaptable as regards soils, and can be grown successfully on sandy loam as well as on very heavy ground. Of course, soil preparation plays an important part in this direction, and it must be remembered that some varieties are suited for light soils and some do better on heavy land.

Early Manistee is best grown on heavy soil, whilst Early Vermont and Scottish Triumph do better in sandy ground. Carman and Up-to-Date are more adaptable, and are suited to all classes of land.

Newly broken up ground is well adapted for growing Potatoes, but the soil should be rich in potash, incorporated with humus, and in the right physical condition to retain moisture. Ground which has been heavily manured for a previous crop, such as Cabbage, and allowed to lie fallow for some months, is also very suitable.

SOIL PREPARATION.—In common with all root or tuberous crops, the Potato requires well broken up ground. A well-drained soil is necessary, and the ground must be thoroughly trenched and allowed to lie fallow for two or three months, and should then be well dug and brought to a fine tilth preparatory to planting. The object of fallowing is to keep the ground in a good, loamy state, so as to retain the soil moisture. A good supply of root moisture is essential for successful Potato cultivation. A dressing of freshly-slaked lime some time before planting will also prove beneficial. Firm the soil thoroughly by rolling or with the back of the spade, and it is ready to receive the seed.

MANURING.—Good, well-decayed stable manure or a special Potato Fertiliser containing phosphorus, potash and nitrogen may be used where required. The quantity depends on the soil and the previous crop, varying from one to three cwt. per acre. In the Home Garden from $\frac{3}{4}$ to 2 ozs. per square yard may be used. Work the manure well into the soil about three weeks before planting the tubers. It must be remembered that Commercial Fertilisers alone are not sufficient to form good Potatoes. The soil must have an abundance of humus in it, so as to retain the moisture and to make the fertiliser available. Care must be taken to avoid any stable manure, lime or Commercial Fertiliser coming into contact with the maturing tuber, as this is liable to cause scab.

DIPPING.—As a precaution against scab tubers may be dipped before planting in a solution of corrosive sublimate. The tubers are immersed for two hours and hung up to drain. This dipping solution is made by mixing $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. of Powdered Corrosive Sublimate with 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ gallons of water, i.e., at the rate of 1 oz. to 30 gallons. Formalin also makes a good Potato dip.

After dipping spread the tubers out in a dry, cool place to dry thoroughly before cutting for planting. The tubers must not be cut before dipping.

TIME OF PLANTING.—For a Spring crop (to be dug late October, November and December), plant from the 20th May to the end of June, for an early crop; during July and August for a late crop (ready for lifting January and February). For an Autumn crop plant from the middle of January to the middle of February, and the crop will be ready about June. The times of lifting given above, of course, depend on the date of planting, and apply exclusively to early varieties. Late sorts take longer to mature.



HOW TO CUT.—Medium-sized Potatoes are the best for use as seed. Cut each Potato in such a way as to allow at least two or three eyes to each piece. There is no need to apply any substance to dry the cut, as the exposed cells dry quickly on exposure to the air. Cut where possible just before planting, and certainly not earlier than the previous night. Carefully planted, 14 lbs. of good tubers will yield sufficient produce for the average family.



HOW TO PLANT.—Give the ground a light raking or harrowing and then make furrows or drills to receive the seed. When planting in the Summer (January-February), put the seed in from 4 to 6 inches deep, in rows 2 feet apart, allowing 15 inches between the plants in the rows. When planting from May to August, put the sets in 3 or 4 inches deep, in rows 2 feet apart, allowing 15 inches between the plants in the rows.

The seeds or pieces of Potato are dropped in the furrows by hand, and after planting these are filled in and the earth given a light raking to conserve the soil moisture.

Seed Potatoes require to be placed in a cool, airy place open to the light, and allowed to sprout before planting. Do not cut withered or soft tubers, but plant whole, and unless the seed is in a really good condition it is advisable not to cut.

GENERAL CULTIVATION.—When the plants are about 2 inches above the ground, hoe between the rows to loosen the soil and keep down the weeds, as well as to admit the air. Repeat this operation every two or three weeks, as the soil must be kept well worked in order to grow good Potatoes. Owing to the prevalence of Irish Blight and Potato Moth, when the plants are about 8 inches high, draw the earth round the stems of the growing plant, and repeat this operation a month or six weeks later. In the Home Garden, a hoe will suffice for this operation, and the soil must never be allowed to set.



WHEN TO DIG.—How to tell when the crop is ready is usually a difficulty with the amateur Potato-grower, and Potatoes are very often allowed to remain far too long in the ground. With the exception of Scottish Triumph, which is better for table consumption when dug a little on the green side, the proper time to start to dig the average early sorts, such as Early Manistree, Early Carman, etc., is when the leaf begins to turn yellow. Digging can be continued thence onward until the crop is cleaned up, and this operation may extend over a month or more if necessary.

The later sorts are longer in maturing, and should be allowed to stay in the ground until the tops have died right down, as this improves their keeping qualities. A late Spring or early Summer crop (if the weather is warm and the crop is ripe) should be lifted promptly, otherwise should rain come along it will start the tubers growing again immediately, making a second growth, which soon renders the Potatoes soft and uneatable. Varieties such as Early Carman, Early Vermont and Early Manistee, planted at the end of May, should be ready to dig about the end of October or early November, and with tubers put in about the middle of January the crop should be ready for lifting about June. When Potatoes are thoroughly ripe, the skins are set so that if, on examination, the skins rub off, it is an indication that they will not keep if dug in that condition.

KINDS TO PLANT.—For a Spring crop, to be dug late October, November or December, Early Carman, Early Manistee, Maul's Thoroughbred, Early Iona, Scottish Triumph, Up-to-Date, or Early Vermont are the best sorts. For a later crop, to be dug January or February, Carman is most satisfactory. For a late Autumn or early Winter crop, to be dug in June, Scottish Triumph, Early Carman and Early Manistee are the best varieties for the Home Garden. Potatoes must not be grown on the same land year after year, but different ground chosen and fresh seed obtained, so as to maintain the quality and yield.

CARMAN No. 1.—One of the best Potatoes grown. Suitable either for use as an early or main crop variety. Very adaptable as regards soils, and does well on both light and heavy ground.

MAUL'S THOROUGHbred.—An excellent table variety. Very early and an enormous yielder. Most suitable for the home garden. Pink skinned. Does best on light sandy soil.

UP-TO-DATE.—Heavy cropper and good keeper. Requires good heavy soil. Medium early.

EARLY VERMONT.—Very early and a good table Potato. Pink skinned. Best suited to a light sandy soil.

SCOTTISH TRIUMPH (Bunning's Pedigreed Stock).—A splendid Autumn Potato and a first-class yielder. White skinned and white fleshed, and of delicious flavour. Requires to be dug slightly on the green side. Most suited to light sandy soil.

EARLY MANISTEE.—An exceptionally quick grower and a beautifully flavoured Potato. The skin is pink and the flesh pure white. Has all the good qualities of the Carman but is much earlier. Requires good heavy soil.

EARLY IONA.—A recently introduced early Potato of splendid appearance and good flavour. Great yielder and well suited to home garden requirements.

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